



## **TEXAS GENERAL LAND OFFICE**

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## **MEDIA ADVISORY**

### **GLO to kick off Veterans Day by honoring oldest living WWII vet**

POW camp survivor to thank East Austin resident Richard Overton

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**  
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AUSTIN — The oldest living U.S. veteran will be the guest of honor at a pre-Veterans Day ceremony this week for Texas General Land Office and Veterans Land Board employees.

Richard Overton, 107, will be honored with a box of choice cigars and some hearty applause at 2 p.m. Thursday at the Stephen F. Austin Building auditorium, Room 170, in the Texas Capitol Complex.

Ken Wallingford, a former Vietnam POW, U.S. Army sniper and Veterans Liaison for the VLB, will be the guest speaker. Wallingford spent 10 months in a tiger cage until released in 1973. He was awarded the Silver Star, Bronze Star, and two Purple Hearts for his valor.

Overton, the oldest surviving World War II serviceman, was recently interviewed for the Voices of Veterans oral history program, which is overseen by the VLB. Born in 1906 in Bastrop County, Overton joined the Army when he was in his mid-30s. He served in the South Pacific from 1942-45, including tours in Hawaii, Guam, Palau and Iwo Jima.

Overton, who later sold furniture and worked for the State Treasurer's office in Austin, gained some media attention around Memorial Day for telling Fox News he would spend the holiday "smoking cigars and drinking whiskey-stiffened coffee." He said he drinks a little whiskey with his beverages to keep the muscles loose, and takes one aspirin per day.

In honor of all World War II veterans, the Voices of Veterans program will be distributing red Buddy Poppies, courtesy of the Veterans of Foreign Wars.

Texas Veterans have a story to tell. Any veteran interested in including his or her story in the Voices of Veterans program may contact the Veterans Land Board at 1-800-252-VETS (8387), or send an e-mail to [vlbinfo@glo.texas.gov](mailto:vlbinfo@glo.texas.gov). Oral history interviews can be conducted in person at the Veterans Land Board in Austin, or by telephone from anywhere in Texas. Interviews usually last from one to two hours.

WHO: The oldest living U.S. World War II Veteran and a POW camp survivor

WHAT: Veterans Day Celebration

WHERE: Stephen F. Austin State Office Building, Room 170

WHEN: 2 p.m. Thursday, Nov. 7

WHY: To honor all veterans who served our country

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